A group of people sitting at a table talking

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**Name:**

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**Welcome to *Relational Peacemaking*!**

This booklet is designed to help you think deeply about the principles taught in the *Relational Peacemaking* course and explore ways you can weave these concepts into your daily life. Each section in this booklet contains three types of material:

* The **study and discussion questions** are designed to stimulate different perspectives and applications of the key principles taught in each of the sessions.
* The **Peacemaking in Action video clips** will give you the opportunity to see and evaluate a realistic demonstration or application of key peacemaking principles.
* The **Search the Scriptures** section encourages you to read relevant Bible passages for yourself and strengthen your understanding of God’s peacemaking wisdom.
* The **Digging Deeper blog posts** give you the opportunity to explore ways to apply these principles in specific family, church, workplace and community settings.

Here are some ways to get the most out of your study:

* Please save this booklet as a Word document in a folder on your own computer or smartphone and answer the questions using your computer or smartphone rather than writing information in by hand. You may cut and paste or type text directly into this document, which will expand as you proceed.
* You may answer these questions with as much or as little detail as you choose. One or two sentences is fine, but if you like to write a few paragraphs, go for it! If you are taking the course as part of a study group, however, keeping your answers relatively concise will make it easier to share them with your group.
* We suggest that you answer at least half of the questions in each lesson, selecting those that are of the greatest relevance to your life currently. If you choose to answer more questions, you will get even more out of this course.
* If you are taking this course for academic or continuing education credit, for RW coaching or as part of your training as an RW Instructor, Coach or Conciliator, you are required to answer at least half of the questions in each session and submit a copy of your notes to your instructor or coach for evaluation at the end of the course.

If you are currently involved in a conflict, I encourage you to also download a copy of the [***Relational Peacemaking Personal Application Workbook***](http://www.rw360.org/downloads)*,* which contains questions that are geared toward immediate application in an existing conflict.

I pray that God uses this course to help you glorify him more fully, serve others and experience the joy of Jesus promise in Matthew 5:9: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

Ken Sande

**Glorify God**

Biblical peacemaking is motivated and guided by a deep desire to please and honor God by drawing attention to the excellence of his character, love and power, and especially to the saving and transforming power of the gospel. One way to do this is ask God to empower us to reflect the character of Christ by following his example and putting his teachings into practice. As we do so, we can find freedom from the self-centered decisions that cause conflict and display the reconciling power of the gospel in our lives.

1

Conflict Provides Opportunities

Few people enjoy conflict. Fewer still view conflict as an opportunity. Yet, if we believe God is sovereign and desires our best, we must also believe that conflict is not an accident. God promises to use every circumstance in our lives to shape and mold us into the image of Christ and display his goodness and power to others. As Ken writes, “Every time you encounter a conflict, you will inevitably show what you really think of God.” This session introduces foundational peacemaking tools, such as the Slippery Slope and the three opportunities of conflict, which will help you to not only resolve disagreements but to steward them for God’s glory.

As you answer these questions on a computer or tablet, the space between the lines will expand automatically.

**1.1 – Introduction and Overview**

1. Why is it helpful for engineers, lawyers, accountants, scientists, pastors, politicians, police officers, mothers, fathers, teenagers and everyone else to study the peacemaking principles God gives to us in Scripture?
2. Describe a person in your life who has often been an admirable peacemaker. What character qualities or skills in that person would you like to develop in your life?
3. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 provides an astonishing promise: “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” How does this passage motivate or encourage you to grow as a peacemaker?
4. What kind of “homework” might God give you as you study this course? In other words, what relational skills do you think he may call you to improve, and what relationships in your life do you hope will be most impacted by this study?

**1.2 – Peacemaking Is Three Dimensional**

1. How do the six skills of relational wisdom (God-awareness, God-engagement, self-awareness, self-engagement, other-awareness and other-awareness) strengthen and reinforce one another?
2. How could these skills strengthen your relationship with God and other people?
3. How could these skills give you greater influence with the people in your life?
4. How could these skills give you a more compelling witness for Christ?

**1.3 – Understanding Conflict and the Four G’s**

1. Think of a recent conflict in your life that involved both substantive and relational issues. How did the substantive issues trigger relational issues? How did relational issues make it harder to resolve the substantive issues?
2. What causes the most conflict in your life: misunderstandings; differences in values, goals, expectations, interests or opinions; competition over limited resources; or sinful attitudes that lead to sinful words or actions? Why do you think this is?
3. How do each of the Four G’s help to resolve conflict?
4. Describe how the gospel is the inspiration, model and method for peacemaking?

**1.4 – The Slippery Slope of Conflict**

1. Which of the slippery slope responses to conflict do you use most naturally?
2. What conflicts or offenses do you find most difficult to overlook even though you later realize you should have overlooked them?
3. What kinds of substantive issues (e.g., family spending, parenting decisions, workplace issues) do negotiate most often in your life?
4. Describe a time when someone else acted as a mediator to help you to resolve a conflict. What did they do that made their involvement both winsome and effective?

**Bonus Question:**

Indicate which Slippery Slope response to conflict was used in each of these situations and whether it was wise or foolish/sinful. Explain your answers.

1. Abraham's response to the friction between Sarai and Hagar (Gen. 16:6):
2. Hagar's response to Sarai's persecution (Gen. 16:6-8):
3. Joseph's response when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him (Gen. 39:11-12):

1. Potiphar's wife's response when Joseph spurned her advances (Gen. 39:13-18):
2. Saul's response to David when he won the hearts of the people (1 Sam. 18:1-16):
3. David's response to Saul's attempts to kill him (1 Sam. 19:9-12):
4. Solomon's response to the dispute over the prostitute's baby (1 Kings 3:16-28):
5. Daniel's response to the command to eat unclean food (Dan. 1:8-16):
6. The Corinthians' response to conflicts with one another (1 Cor. 6:1-8):
7. The apostles' response to the conflict about distributing food (Acts 6:1-7):
8. Barnabas's response to the conflict between Saul and the apostles (Acts 9:26-28):
9. Peter's response when Jewish Christians complained about teaching Gentiles (Acts 11:1-18):
10. God's response to our sin through the gospel:

**Peacemaking in Action**

[**Innocent Man Befriends a Crooked Cop**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wffHBQKq74)

1. How did this story inspire or challenge you, especially as you think about some of your past conflicts?
2. How does this story illustrate the key principle of Session 1, “Conflict is an opportunity to reflect the reconciling power of Jesus and his gospel”?

**Search the Scriptures**

Having read the supporting Scriptures for this lesson, how would you expand or elaborate on one or two of the key principles in this lesson? Feel free to refer to additional passages that support a particular principle.

**Seek Transforming Grace**

Write a prayer asking God to give you grace to practice specific principles taught in this session, so they become lifelong habits that reflect the transforming power of Christ in your life (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 4:20-24).

**Digging Deeper**

Read Chapter 1 in *The Peacemaker*

The following blog posts illustrate different ways to apply relational peacemaking in daily life. We encourage you to read the posts that seem most relevant to your life at this time. If you are taking this course for credit or advanced training, you need to read at least one of these posts and answer the associated questions.

[Falsely Accused](http://rw360.org/2015/11/01/falsely-accused/) (Wrongly accused employee wisely resists the temptation to lash back)

1. How do you feel when you think you’re being wrongly accused? What do you typically do? What results does your reaction typically produce?
2. To see an example of what happens when we allow our emotions to “hijack” us and how to avoid such reactions, see the video clips in [Four Ways to Defeat Hijacking](https://rw360.org/2014/05/19/four-ways-defeat-hijacking/).
3. Can you think of a time when you or someone you know did not become defensive or angry when wrongfully accused? How did that situation turn out?
4. What are some Bible passages or stories that would help you avoid an impulsive reaction the next time you are unjustly criticized?
5. How does Susan’s “relational wisdom” response differ from how someone using good “[emotional intelligence](https://rw360.org/emotional-intelligence/)” would have responded?
6. How would you rate Barbara’s relational wisdom? What relational and leadership mistakes did she make? How could she have handled this situation more wisely?

[Preventing a Breach](https://rw360.org/2019/02/24/preventing-a-breach-2/) (Practicing the SOG Plan can prevent many conflicts)

1. In what situations or with which people are you most often provoked to speak impulsively? Why?
2. Think back to the last time you breached a relationship with impulsive words. Imagine you could go back to that situation and handle it by applying the SOG plan, as outlined above. How would you answer the SOG questions?

[Lincoln’s Relational Wisdom](https://rw360.org/2018/03/05/politics-pride-and-emotion-2/) (Lincoln’s relational wisdom helped to save our nation)

1. When do you have the greatest difficulty controlling your pride and emotions? What is it that you desire or fear that makes you vulnerable to losing control?
2. Think of people who model humility and self-control. Describe a situation in which they displayed these qualities.
3. Why does emotion play such a strong role in politics? (see these articles on [Emotional Intelligence in Politics and Diplomacy](https://rw360.org/2013/11/07/articles-benefits-eieq/#politics)).

2

Live at Peace

The search for peace is constant and elusive. Christians understand that real peace is found in Jesus – it is our relationship with him that provides us with the personal peace we long for and the ability to live at peace with others. Such peace is fragile and is easily broken when we adopt the worldly attitude that life is all about satisfying our desires, looking out for “Number One.” One of the most troubling examples of this is when Christians go to court against other Christians, something Paul explicitly condemns in 1 Corinthians 6. This sessionreminds us to focus, first, on peace with God, which enables us to live at peace with others and personally experience the internal “peace that passes understanding.”

**2.1 – Conflict Provides Opportunities**

1. 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1 says, “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” Write personal paraphrase of this passage that describes the opportunities God gives to you through conflict.
2. How has God worked through past conflict to change you?
3. How can God use conflict to lead others to Christ? Is there a particular person who might come to know Christ because of the way you deal with a current or future conflict?
4. Give an example of how can God use your failures to show that he is real and working in your life?

**2.2 – Glorify God Through Conflict**

1. What are some general ways that God can bring himself glorify (reveal his goodness and power) through conflict?
2. Think of a personal conflict that turned out well. What qualities of God were reflected in you or the other person in that situation?
3. Think of a personal conflict that turned out badly. What qualities of God were not reflected in you or the other person in that situation?
4. Think of a conflict you are currently facing or could easily face in the near future. How could you please and honor God in that situation?

**2.3 – Serve and Grow Through Conflict**

1. What are some practical ways that you have served or could serve others through conflict?
2. What are some ways that God has used conflict for good or to help you to grow?
3. How can seeing conflict as a “stewardship opportunity” change the way you deal with it?
4. How does it help to remember that success in conflict is not based on results but on faithfulness to God?

**2.4 – God Calls Us to Live at Peace**

1. How do you define “peace?” What are some of the words that come to mind when you hear the word “peace?”
2. What is the difference between “unity” and “uniformity?” What problems are created when families or churches pursue uniformity rather than unity?
3. Why is it that inner peace is a byproduct of being right with God and others?
4. What practical steps could you take soon to find greater peace with God, with others and in yourself?

**2.5 – Enhancing Our Witness for Christ**

1. In your own words, explain why living at peace is central to our witness for Christ.
2. Why is our witnessing more effective when we give up trying to appear to be “squeaky clean” and instead be honest about our weaknesses and failures?
3. Why do you think Jesus commands us to seek reconciliation even ahead of corporate worship? (Matthew 5:23-24)
4. Unpack and expand on this statement: “Peacemaking shows that we take the gospel seriously.”

**Peacemaking in Action**

[**Amish Offer Amazing Forgiveness to Killer’s Mother**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uptsIngNxCY)

1. What impresses you most about the way the Amish demonstrated forgiveness for Terry Roberts?
2. How did their forgiveness model the forgiveness God has given to us through Christ?
3. How does this story convict or inspire you as you think about forgiving someone who has done you a great wrong?

**Search the Scriptures**

Having read the supporting Scriptures for this lesson, how would you expand or elaborate on one or two of the key principles in this lesson? Feel free to refer to additional passages that support a particular principle.

**Seek Transforming Grace**

Write a prayer asking God to give you grace to practice specific principles taught in this session, so they become lifelong habits that reflect the transforming power of Christ in your life (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 4:20-24).

**Digging Deeper**

Read Chapter 2 in *The Peacemaker*

The following blog posts illustrate different ways to apply relational peacemaking in daily life. We encourage you to read the posts that seem most relevant to your life at this time. If you are taking this course for credit or advanced training, you need to read at least one of these posts and answer the associated questions.

[**Daddy, Is that You? (A Wedding Day Reconciliation)**](https://rw360.org/2021/11/10/daddy-is-that-you-a-wedding-day-reconciliation/)

1. Does Becky’s story seem impossible? Why might many people feel that way? What does our doubt about stories like this say about our faith in the goodness and power of God?
2. Becky’s story is actually true. How does it illustrate the truth of Jesus’ words in [Matthew 19:26](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2019.26), “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”
3. What do you think about Pastor Lee’s actions? How would you describe his character and his faith? How did he imitate Jesus Christ? (see [Eph. 2:11-22](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.%202.11-22); [2 Cor. 5:14-21](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.%205.14-21)). Do you know of a situation in which you could play a similar role? What is holding you back?
4. Is there a broken relationship in your past that might be reconciled if you took the initiative to go and confess how you wronged that person? If so, the [Seven A’s of Confession](https://rw360.org/seven-as-of-a-biblical-confession/) provide a simple pattern for making an effective confession (see [Prov. 28:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.%2028.13); [1 John 1:8-9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%201.8-9)).
5. Is there a broken relationship in your past that might be reconciled if you took the initiative to go and offer forgiveness to someone who has wronged you? If so, the [Four Promises of Forgiveness](https://rw360.org/biblical-forgiveness/) provide a simple pattern for offering forgiveness in a way that reflects the gospel of Christ (see [Rom. 5:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.%205.8); [Eph. 4:30-32](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.%204.30-32)).

[**My Wife’s Punch List Was Driving Our Son Crazy**](https://rw360.org/2015/10/04/my-wifes-punch-list/)(Relational wisdom heals mother-son tensions)

1. Have you ever experienced relational tensions like those between Jeff and Corlette? What desires or agendas may have fueled those tensions? How did those situations turn out? If you could do it over, what would you do differently?
2. How did becoming more God-aware change Jeff’s perspective and behavior?
3. How did becoming more self-aware change Jeff’s perspective and behavior?
4. How did becoming more other-aware change Jeff’s perspective and behavior?
5. Is there a relationship in your life that might improve if you became more God-aware, self-aware and other-aware? Describe some specific ways you could apply these concepts.

[**Seven Steps to Empathy**](https://rw360.org/2014/07/04/seven-steps-empathy/) (How to strengthen your God-given capacity for empathy)

1. How can empathy and compassion help to reduce conflict and promote peace with other people?
2. How did each of these individuals model empathy: Boaz (Ruth 2:8-16), Jonathan (1 Sam. 20:12-17; 1Sam. 20:41) Esther (Esther 8:3-6), Jesus (Matt. 14:14; Luke 17:13; John 11:32-35).
3. Think of someone you know who is highly empathetic. Which of the seven qualities described above does he or she demonstrate most consistently? How does that impact other people?
4. Think of a person to whom you’d like to show greater empathy. Pick just two or three of the seven qualities of empathy and start practicing them with that person this week. Add one additional quality each week and notice how your relationship changes in the next two months.

[**Barnabas: Portrait of a Peacemaker**](https://rw360.org/2017/04/30/barnabas-portrait-peacemaker/)(How to imitate one of the Bible’s greatest peacemakers)

1. Think of a person who is especially effective at resolving conflict and restoring peace. Which of the character qualities listed above did that person possess and exercise?
2. Identify two or three of these qualities where you are often weak. Give some specific examples of how that weakness has impacted your relationships.
3. What two or three qualities would you most like God to help you develop in the next few months? What are some specific ways that such growth would impact your relationships?

3

Trust in the Lord and Do Good

We all say that we “trust God.” Yet, when we find ourselves in serious conflict, many of us end up trusting in our own emotions and reactions. Fear and pride can drive us to think and behave in ways that are fundamentally opposed to God. If God is sovereign, however, we can trust that he is looking out for us every moment, even when circumstances are difficult, and life is challenging. As Ken writes in *The Peacemaker*, “The trials that God gives us require that we practice the character qualities that will make us like our Lord.” The Bible is full of examples of people who trusted God, from Joseph and Esther to Paul and, ultimately, Jesus himself. Trust is a decision. This session reminds us that God uses that trust to bring him honor and to promote genuine peace and reconciliation.

**3.1 – A Stolen Baby and a $200M Lawsuit**

1. Think of a situation in your life when you found it difficult to trust God? How did your struggle with trust impact your thoughts, emotions and actions in that situation?
2. Think of a situation in your life when you experienced a strong trust in God. How did your trust impact your thoughts, emotions and actions in that situation?
3. Is there someone you know or have heard about whose trust in God is or was admirable? Describe that person’s character and behavior in that situation. What did that person’s behavior reveal about his or her attitude toward God? What can you learn from that person?

1. Take a few minutes to read all of Psalm 37. What specific promises encourage you to trust God more fully as you work through conflict?

**3.2 - Faithful Peacemaking Requires a Big God**

1. Explain this statement, “Faithful peacemaking requires a “Big God.”
2. Do you believe that God is supremely powerful and supremely loving (Ps. 62:11-12)? If so, how does this belief impact your approach to conflict?
3. Many people believe that faith and trust in God should result in freedom from suffering. Is this a biblical view? How would you respond if someone said to you, “If God really loved me, he would not have let this happen to me.”
4. Deuteronomy 29:29 tells us that there are secret things that only God understands and also things that he reveals fully to us. How can this teaching guide or encourage you when you’re in a difficult conflict?
   1. **– The Path of Trust Has Been Well Marked**
5. What part of Ken’s story about the adopted baby impacts you the most?
6. Joseph responded to his brothers with these words, “You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive.” How can Joseph’s perspective inspire and encourage you the next time you’re involved in a conflict?
7. How do the examples of other heroes in the Bible, like David, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Peter, Paul and, most of all, Jesus, help you to modify your attitude toward conflict?
8. How does trusting God free you to respond to conflict in a biblically faithful way?

**Peacemaking in Action**

**Background:** Louis Zemperini was shot down in the Pacific during World War II and suffered terrible abuse as a prisoner of war, especially from a guard he called “The Bird.” This is the story of his redemption and new life mission through the gospel.

[**Unbroken: Forgiveness Is Always Possible**](https://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/unbroken/forgiveness-is-always-possible)

1. How did Louis imitate Joseph’s trust in God?
2. How did the gospel inspire Louis to return to Japan to forgive his prison guards?
3. What did Louis’ son mean when he said, “Forgiving the guards was actually salvation for him”?
4. Has God placed you in a situation where you could imitate Louis’ example, even if in a much less severe situation?

**Search the Scriptures**

Having read the supporting Scriptures for this lesson, how would you expand or elaborate on one or two of the key principles in this lesson? Feel free to refer to additional passages that support a particular principle.

**Seek Transforming Grace**

Write a prayer asking God to give you grace to practice specific principles taught in this session, so they become lifelong habits that reflect the transforming power of Christ in your life (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 4:20-24).

**Digging Deeper**

Read Chapter 3 in *The Peacemaker*

The following blog posts illustrate different ways to apply relational peacemaking in daily life. We encourage you to read the posts that seem most relevant to your life at this time. If you are taking this course for credit or advanced training, you need to read at least one of these posts and answer the associated questions.

[**Reputation vs Character**](https://rw360.org/2018/09/19/reputation-vs-character-2/)(How God uses unjust criticism to build our character)

1. The Bible teaches that it’s sometime right to confront sin and injustice and to actively defend our reputations (see [Matt. 18:15-20](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.%2018.15-20); [Acts 16:35-39](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2016.35-39); [Acts 22:25-29](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2022.25-29); [Acts 25:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2025.11)). Other Scriptures teach that we should sometimes overlook offenses, endure mistreatment, and wait for God to deliver us (see [Prov. 19:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.%2019.11); [Col. 3:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.%203.13); [1Pet. 2:20-23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.%202.20-23); Psalm 37). How do you know when it’s a time to be quiet or a time to speak up?

1. What are some of the ineffective or counterproductive ways that we are tempted to respond when our reputations are threatened? Have you ever used one of those methods? What was the result?
2. Think of a time when God allowed your reputation to be challenged or damaged. What character qualities do you think he might have been working to develop in your life? What did you learn from the situation? How did you grow?
3. Can you think of any current events where these principles might be relevant?

[**Springing from Adversity to Worship**](https://rw360.org/2018/10/04/springing-from-adversity-to-worship-2-2/) (How to use stress and injustice for good)

1. How do you typically respond when people sin against you, take you for granted, fail to stand up for you or break their commitments to you? With worship and growth, or with self-pity, bitterness, retaliation, or withdrawal?
2. How does God treat you when you sin against him, take him for granted, fail to stand up for him, or break your commitments to him? Do you take his response for granted or does it regularly amaze you and inspire you to follow his example?
3. Think of a recent experience of mistreatment? How can you use it as a springboard for worship and personal growth?

[**Changing a Murderer into a Minister**](https://rw360.org/2018/06/27/changing-a-murderer-into-a-minister/) (God can use the worst of life’s experiences for his glory and our good)

1. Why is it that Businge could sincerely write, "I praise God who prolonged my sentence in prison"?
2. How does this story echo some of the major themes from the story of Joseph, whose brothers sold him into slavery?
3. How does this story illustrate the promises of Romans 8:28-29: "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."
4. What lesson from this story can you apply in your life?

**Preliminary Case Study**

**Read case study #1, Missions Meltdown** ([download booklet here](http://www.rw360.org/downloads)). At the end of the course, you will have the opportunity to write detailed advice on how to approach this situation. For now, however, simply write some preliminary thoughts on (1) what you would advise your friend not to do and (2) how some of the peacemaking principles you have learned so far might eventually be relevant to this situation.

**Get the Log Out**

Attacking others only invites counterattack. Therefore, Jesus teaches us to face up to our own contributions to a conflict before we focus on what others have done. When we honestly admit our own faults, our opponents will often respond in kind. As tensions decrease, the way may be opened for meaningful discussion, negotiation and reconciliation.

4

Is This Really Worth Fighting Over?

Rights or responsibilities? The tendency these days is to focus on my rights and pay less attention to my responsibilities. Too often, this leads to conflicts with others. Scripture, such as Matthew 7:3-5, requires that we think differently. We are called to take account of our responsibilities before asserting our rights. This is easier to do when we spend time clarifying the issues that confront us as either substantive or personal. In many instances, the best response is to overlook an offense. Other times we will need to pursue a godly solution. In every situation, we are to see ourselves as stewards of rights and responsibilities and use them to bring glory to God and healing to relationships.

**4.1 - Overlooking Offenses**

1. Describe a time in your life when a critical, negative attitude in you or another person led to unnecessary conflict.
2. Proverbs 19:11 says, “Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.” What is the difference between overlooking an offense and denying that an offense took place? How do these two different responses typically impact your relationships in the long run?
3. Describe some situations where you are too easily provoked, that is, where you are inclined to confront offenses that really could be overlooked.
4. Without sharing identifying information, describe a situation where you knew an offense was too serious to overlook and you decided to discuss the situation.

**4.2 - Attitude Checkup**

1. Viktor Frankl survived a Nazi concentration camp after losing his entire family. He later wrote, “The last of the human freedoms is to choose one’s attitude.” How did this insight help him to survive such a terrible ordeal? How could this insight help your response to future conflicts in your life?
2. Think of some past conflicts in your life. What are some things you could have rejoiced about even in those difficult situations?
3. Think of a conflict where you forgot about the presence of God. How wisely did you approach that conflict? How did it turn out?
4. How would your approach to that conflict have been different if you had been consciously and deliberately God-aware and God-engaging?

**4.3 - Focus on What Is True, Honorable and Commendable**

1. Describe a conflict in your life where you suffered from “tunnel vision,” that is, you focused only on the negative things about another person. How did that attitude impact your approach to that conflict?
2. How can reflecting deeply on the gospel help you to shift your focus to what is “true, honorable, just, pure, lovely or commendable” in a person with whom you are in conflict?
3. Think of a past conflict that didn’t go as well as you wish it had. If you had it all to do over again, what positive things about the other person would you try to keep in mind?
4. In Matthew 5:9, Jesus gives us a remarkable promise: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” Name at least five ways that you could be blessed if you serve the Lord as a peacemaker.

**4.4 - Count the Cost**

1. Recall a time when you or someone you know failed to count the cost of pursuing their “rights.” What was the impact on the relationship involved? On the person who continued to pursue their rights?
2. Why is it that “a gracious, gentle attitude can prevent or resolve most conflicts.”

**Peacemaking in Action**

**Background:** *October Sky* is a movie based on the real-life story of Homer Hickam, a coal miner’s son who was inspired by the launch of Sputnik 1 in 1957 to take up rocketry. In doing so, he rejected his father’s wish that he follows in his steps as a foreman in the coal mines. As a result, his father pulled away from him, leaving Homer unsupported as he struggled to follow his dreams.

But when Homer faced an overwhelming crisis, his father made a great personal sacrifice by ending a strike so a company machinist could rebuild a model rocket and help Homer win a national science fair. Homer was so excited that he didn’t recognize Dr. Wernher Von Braun, the father of modern rocketry.

When Homer returned home, he tried to reach out to his father, but his father still felt so rejected that his walls were still up. But a small gesture from Homer in the first video below opens the door for reconciliation, which you will see in the second video.

[**October Skies – He Isn’t My Hero**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzOH54GemVo)

[**October Skies – This One’s Going to Go for Miles**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZezvNWgi4M)

1. What does Homer say in the first clip that surprises his father? How does that impact Homer’s father?
2. How do these men make themselves emotionally vulnerable to each other?
3. In the second video, how did body language, facial expressions and tone of voice communicate more powerfully than actual words?
4. How did this story illustrate the key principle of this session, “A gracious, gentle attitude can prevent or resolve most conflicts.”

**Search the Scriptures**

Having read the supporting Scriptures for this lesson, how would you expand or elaborate on one or two of the key principles in this lesson? Feel free to refer to additional passages that support a particular principle.

**Seek Transforming Grace**

Write a prayer asking God to give you grace to practice specific principles taught in this session, so they become lifelong habits that reflect the transforming power of Christ in your life (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 4:20-24).

**Digging Deeper**

Read Chapter 4 in *The Peacemaker*

The following blog posts illustrate different ways to apply relational peacemaking in daily life. We encourage you to read the posts that seem most relevant to your life at this time. If you are taking this course for credit or advanced training, you need to read at least one of these posts and answer the associated questions.

[**The Last Human Freedom**](https://rw360.org/2017/02/12/last-human-freedom/)(A powerful lesson from a man who survived the Holocaust)

1. What enabled the apostle Paul to be content in every circumstance of life? ([Phil. 4:11-13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.%204.11-13))
2. What attitude does God call us to choose when we are experiencing hardship or injustice? (Psalm 37)
3. How can an increased awareness of Jesus’ attitude impact our relationship with the people around us? ([Phil. 2:1-11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.%202.1-11))
4. Both the Psalms and personal experience show that life sometimes involves real pain, grieving, and sorrow. What do the Psalms teach us about honestly experiencing and expressing that suffering, while still maintaining an attitude of faith and hope? (Psalm 73; Psalm 102)

[**Are You Velcro or Teflon**](https://rw360.org/2018/05/01/velcro-teflon-2/)(How a critical spirit destroys relationships)

1. Do you have a “blacklist”? Who has been on it? How did they get there?
2. How do you think of people on your black list? How do you treat them?
3. How do you think they feel about the way you view and treat them?
4. How do you feel when you’ve got an active blacklist? What does it do to you?
5. Do you want to break this habit? You can start by practicing the three steps given above.

[**Defusing Explosive Meetings**](https://rw360.org/2017/07/23/defusing-explosive-meetings-2/)

1. How do these Scripture passages support the five questions listed above: [1 Peter 3:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet%203.8), [John 8:1-11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%208.1-11), [Matthew 7:3-4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%207.3-4), [Galatians 5:22-23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal%205.22-23); [Philippians 2:1-11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil%202.1-11), [Ephesians 4:29](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%204.29)?
2. Without identifying individuals, describe a conversation or meeting that escalated into accusations and demands. What were the key relational failures that caused it to go downhill?
3. Think of a person who is skilled at managing tense or volatile conversations. What does he or she do that helps others to converse reasonably and constructively?
4. How could you apply some of those same skills in your life today?

[**17 Ways to Respond to Explosive Politics**](https://rw360.org/2020/10/22/politics-as-ministry-2/)(Applying relational wisdom to politics)

1. If you feel like a winner after an election, try to put yourself in the shoes of those who feel like they lost. What emotions are they probably feeling? What events have contributed to those emotions?
2. Which of the recommended steps would be most helpful for you to take when engaging someone who has experienced a major loss or disappointment?
3. If you feel like a loser after an election, what might you do today that you would regret six months from now? Where are you tempted to forget or doubt God? What good might God be planning to bring from these events?
4. Which of the recommended steps would be most helpful for you to take as you process your loss and engage people who feel like they won in an election?

5

Conflict Starts in the Heart

This session is all about idols, not the kind made of wood and stone, but the kind we build in our hearts. We are “created to desire,” but too often even our godly desires become demands that set us on a destructive path with others. When desires drive our attitudes and behaviors in ungodly ways, we have crossed the boundary into idol-worship. As David Powlison wrote, “When you and I fight, our minds become filled with accusations: your wrongs and my rights preoccupy me. We play the self-righteous judge in the mini-kingdoms we establish.” This is why getting logs out of our own eyes is such an important first step.

**5.1 – The Origin of an Idol**

1. When we are in a conflict with someone, we tend to speculate on their motives and focus on their wrongs. How do Jesus’s words in Matthew 15:19 (“For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander”) challenge you to change your focus?
2. The key verse in this session is James 4:1-2: “What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.” Describe some good desires that sometimes grow into consuming demands in your life. How does this affect your relationships?
3. How can a good desire become a “functional God”?

**5.2 – The Progression of an Idol**

1. Other than the situations already mentioned in this lesson, what are a couple ways that people in the Bible have demonstrated the four steps in the progression of an idol?
2. Who have you judged in a conflict because you felt that they were preventing you from fulfilling a desire that had grown into an idol?
3. How do you punish people who seem to be blocking your idols?
4. Describe a situation where you have seen this dynamic lived out: “When \_\_\_\_\_ ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy.”

**5.3 – X-Ray Questions**

To identify idols in your life, answer at least four of the following X-Ray questions:

1. What am I preoccupied with?
2. What do I want to preserve or avoid at any cost?
3. Where do I put my trust?
4. What do I fear?
5. When a certain desire is not met, do I feel frustration, anxiety, resentment, bitterness, anger or depression?
6. Is there something I desire so much that I am willing to disappoint or hurt others in order to have it?

**5.4 – The Cure for an Idolatrous Heart**

1. Write a statement of confession demonstrating repentance for idols that have controlled you in the past. Be specific about the desires that have ruled your heart more than God at times.
2. Think about the analogy about Bill Gates getting upset about losing a nickel even though he has billions of dollars in the bank. How have you done something like this when you’ve been involved in a conflict?
3. What are some of the things you can sincerely and passionately delight in about God even in the midst of serious conflict?
4. Explain this statement in your own words: “God uses conflict to reveal our idols and free us from them.”

**Peacemaking in Action**

**Background:** In this video you will see a mother give her daughter new clothes that are a size too small with the goal of motivating her daughter to lose weight.

[**Spanglish – New Clothes**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nN7BtPGp1aM&t=8s)

1. What good desire on the mother’s part has grown into an idol? Describe the progression of this desire into an idol and how the mother tries to manipulate her daughter into serving that idol.
2. What emotions did the daughter feel? The father? The housekeeper? How did their body language communicate these emotions?
3. What more might the father have done? What held him back?
4. Have you ever been manipulated to serve someone else’s idol? How did it make you feel?

**Search the Scriptures**

Having read the supporting Scriptures for this lesson, how would you expand or elaborate on one or two of the key principles in this lesson? Feel free to refer to additional passages that support a particular principle.

**Seek Transforming Grace**

Write a prayer asking God to give you grace to practice specific principles taught in this session, so they become lifelong habits that reflect the transforming power of Christ in your life (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 4:20-24).

**Digging Deeper**

Read Chapter 5 in *The Peacemaker*

The following blog posts illustrate different ways to apply relational peacemaking in daily life. We encourage you to read the posts that seem most relevant to your life at this time. If you are taking this course for credit or advanced training, you need to read at least one of these posts and answer the associated questions.

[**A Common Lust**](https://rw360.org/2017/08/14/a-common-lust/)(Even St. Augustine struggled with self-vindication)

1. Have you ever struggled with the lust of always vindicating yourself?
2. When was the last time this happened? What triggered it? How did you respond? How did your response impact your relationship with other people?
3. How can dwelling on the vindication you’ve already received through Christ help you to fight the lust of trying to vindicate yourself?
4. What do these passages have to say about listening to correction: [Proverbs 12:15](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%2012.15); [Proverbs 13:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%2013.10); [Proverbs 15:32](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%2015.32); [Proverbs 17:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%2017.10)?
5. To learn more about how to fight the lust of self-vindication, see Alfred Poirier’s excellent article, [The Cross and Criticism](https://rw360.org/the-cross-and-criticism/).

[**Three Qualities that Improve Every Relationship**](https://rw360.org/2019/05/05/three-qualities-improve-every-relationship/)(A key to developing close relationships)

1. How do the qualities of humility, teachability and flexibility mutually reinforce and support one another?
2. How do these three qualities contribute to better friendships?
3. Why are these three qualities essential to a fulfilling and durable marriage?
4. How do these three qualities contribute to better job performance and career advancement?

[**Has Your Strength Become a Weakness**](https://rw360.org/2022/05/08/has-your-strength-become-a-weakness/)(Sin can corrupt even our best qualities)

1. What are your greatest strengths?
2. How have those strengths sometimes been twisted into great weaknesses?
3. How could you sanctify those strengths today and use them more consistently and effectively to honor God and serve other people?
4. What are the greatest strengths of your church, ministry or business?
5. How could those strengths actually become weaknesses?
6. How can you sanctify those strengths and use them more consistently and effectively to build God’s kingdom?

6

Confession Brings Freedom

The gospel brings freedom to wrongdoers. In Christ, our sins are removed from us “as far as the east is from the west.” Recognizing we are both sinful and forgiven enables us to strip away pride and pretension, examine ourselves honestly and confess our sins when we are wrong. Confession is seldom easy, but when done well, it brings freedom and helps us to be reconciled to others. The 7 A’s are a checklist for constructing and making good confessions, ones that are both freeing and reconciling. Godly sorrow opens the door to transformation of our hearts and transformed hearts lead to changed behavior. We are never too old to experience God’s transforming love, or so sinful that his grace cannot penetrate.

**6.1 - The Power of Confession**

1. Explain the warning and the promise in the memory verse for this session: “He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy” (Prov. 28:13).
2. What is one of the most sincere and compelling confessions you have ever given or received? What was the result?
3. Why do the words “if,” “perhaps” and “maybe” “weaken a confession?
4. How can a sincere confession rekindle hope that a relationship can be restored?

**6.2 - The Seven A’s of Confession**

1. Describe a time when you or someone else confessed a sin to more than one person, either one at time or to a group. How did those people respond?
2. How does the word “but” weaken a confession?
3. Why is it helpful to specifically admit the heart sins (pride, jealousy, greed, bitterness, etc.) that lead to sinful words or actions?
4. Explain the statement, “Gossip is an adult’s show and tell.”

**6.3 - The Rest of the Seven A’s**

1. Why is it important to “acknowledge the hurt,” that is, to specifically recognize how your actions impacted another person’s feelings?
2. What are some ways that you or someone else has demonstrated sincere repentance by accepting the consequences of his or her wrongs?
3. Think of a past conflict. What would you have done differently if you had applied the following principle in that situation? “You can measure the sincerity of a confession by how detailed the plan of repentance is.”
4. Elaborate on this key principle: “Confession brings freedom.”

**Peacemaking in Action**

**Background:** Caleb has been a self-absorbed husband who has loved his job more than his wife and taken the stress of his work on her through many angry outbursts. Catherine has withdrawn from him emotionally and is being drawn toward an affair with a coworker. Caleb has recently put his trust in Christ and is trying desperately to save his marriage.

[**Fireproof - I’m So Sorry**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZY-C_36fla4)

1. How do you read Catherine’s body language as she listens to Caleb?
2. Which elements of the “Seven A’s of Confession does Caleb use?
3. What makes Caleb’s confession meaningful and credible?
4. If you were in Catherine’s place, what would you be feeling and thinking at the end of this scene?

**Search the Scriptures**

Having read the supporting Scriptures for this lesson, how would you expand or elaborate on one or two of the key principles in this lesson? Feel free to refer to additional passages that support a particular principle.

**Seek Transforming Grace**

Write a prayer asking God to give you grace to practice specific principles taught in this session, so they become lifelong habits that reflect the transforming power of Christ in your life (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 4:20-24).

**Digging Deeper**

Read Chapter 6 in *The Peacemaker*

The following blog posts illustrate different ways to apply relational peacemaking in daily life. We encourage you to read the posts that seem most relevant to your life at this time. If you are taking this course for credit or advanced training, you need to read at least one of these posts and answer the associated questions.

[**No Excuses**](https://rw360.org/2019/02/11/no-excuses-2/)(Why excuses weaken confessions)

1. Why do we all long to offer “explanations” for our failures?
2. How do you feel when people try to explain their wrongs against you?
3. What was the most healing confession you’ve heard? What made it so helpful?
4. How can a deeper understanding of the gospel free us from the desire to excuse our wrongs?

[**A Lost Translation … Almost**](https://rw360.org/2018/05/16/a-lost-translation-almost/) (How confession saved a vital ministry)

1. Describe a time in your life when a failure to confess damaged a relationship.
2. Describe a time in your life when a sincere confession saved a relationship.
3. Can you think of a long overdue confession you need to make? Do it today!

[**A Wave of Confessions Saves a Church**](https://rw360.org/2021/11/20/wave-of-confessions-saves-church/)(Public confessions are contagious and healing)

1. How does the story given above illustrate the “Golden Result,” which is: “People will usually treat you the way you treat them.”
2. Have you ever been part of a church that struggled with prolonged conflict? How did the sinful behavior of a few people fuel similar behavior in others?
3. How does prolonged conflict in a church impact that church’s public reputation and witness for Christ?
4. Have you ever seen a church recover from prolonged conflict without forcing the pastor or other people to leave? What was it that turned things around?
5. If you know of a church that has been struggling with conflict, please forward this blog post to them … gifted assistance is readily available!

**Preliminary Case Study**

**Read case study #2, Birthday Tug-of-War** ([download booklet here](http://www.rw360.org/downloads)). At the end of the course, you will have the opportunity to write detailed advice on how to approach this situation. For now, however, simply write some preliminary thoughts on (1) what you would advise your friend not to do and (2) how some of the peacemaking principles you have learned so far might eventually be relevant to this situation.

**Gently Restore**

When others fail to see or acknowledge their contribution to a conflict, we sometimes need to graciously help them to recognize their fault. If they refuse to respond appropriately, we may need to involve respected friends, church leaders or others who can encourage repentance and restore peace.

7

Just Between the Two of You

If “owning” our own sins is hard, speaking with someone who has sinned against us is often harder. Most of us have experienced harsh confrontation and rebuke. Even when merited, such incidents can leave us feeling personally assaulted. The point of passages such as Matthew 18:15 is not punishment, but restoration. We are called to win our brother over. To do so, we need to adjust our message to fit the person who receives it, “building others up, according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” Engaging others in this way is both an art and a skill and requires that we first examine our hearts and confess our sins. This takes on different forms in different cultures, but the goal of correcting others is the same – loving restoration, returning them to full functioning within the Body of Christ.

**7.1 – The Power of Sincere Confession**

1. In the story about the man facing a divorce, what were the major differences between his initial confession and the confession he gave after he had been working with a conciliator?
2. Describe a confession that dramatically and positively changed the course of a conflict?

**7.2 – God Calls Us to Lovingly Correct One Another**

1. Explain the memory verse for this session in your own words: “Brothers, if anyone is caught in a transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.”
2. Describe a situation where someone offered you correction and you could tell he or she was doing it out of genuine love and concern for you. How did you respond?
3. What are the major differences between “confronting someone about his or her sin” and “offering someone loving correction”?
4. How does it help to think of offering correction as a “rescue mission” modeled after a shepherd seeking a lost sheep, as described in Matthew 18:12-14?

**7.3 – Face to Face**

1. Why is it wise to offer advice or correction face-to-face rather than by texting, email, a letter or even a phone call?
2. When is it appropriate for a neutral third party to serve as an initial intermediary before two estranged people come together face-to-face?

**7.4 – When to Correct**

1. Are you usually reluctant or quick to correct others? What are the downsides of your natural inclination? How can you guard against those downsides by being more God-aware, others-aware and self-aware?
2. What motivations do we need to guard against when confronting someone? What motivations should we ask God to increase when correcting someone?
3. Without providing identifying details, describe a situation you experienced or learned of when a sin was too serious to overlook.
4. What are some specific things you can do when offering correction that will make it easier for the other person to hear and respond without becoming defensive? (Hint, re-read the memory verse for this lesson.)

**7.5 – Special Considerations**

1. Why is it so wise and helpful to “get the log out of your own eye” before you try to help others see “the speck” in their eyes?
2. What is the “Golden Result”? Describe a time when you personally experienced the Golden Result.
3. What might you do differently when offering advice or correction to a non-Christian? When offering correction to someone who has authority over you? When offering correction to someone who is under your authority?
4. Explain why this statement is true: “Constructive correction is a sign of genuine love.”

**Peacemaking in Action**

[**Table 7 – Someone Is Listening**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_P4DTQ1OFo&t=8s)

1. How did this video demonstrate the negative impact of the “Golden Result”?
2. How did this video demonstrate the positive impact of the “Golden Result”?

**Search the Scriptures**

Having read the supporting Scriptures for this lesson, how would you expand or elaborate on one or two of the key principles in this lesson? Feel free to refer to additional passages that support a particular principle.

**Seek Transforming Grace**

Write a prayer asking God to give you grace to practice specific principles taught in this session, so they become lifelong habits that reflect the transforming power of Christ in your life (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 4:20-24).

**Digging Deeper**

Read Chapter 7 in *The Peacemaker*

If you are dealing with a situation that involves power differentials or some kind of abuse, please see [Safeguards Against the Misuse of Power](http://www.rw360.org/abuse).

The following blog posts illustrate different ways to apply relational peacemaking in daily life. We encourage you to read the posts that seem most relevant to your life at this time. If you are taking this course for credit or advanced training, you need to read at least one of these posts and answer the associated questions.

[**Building Passport**](https://rw360.org/2021/05/26/building-passport-3/)(How to earn credibility and influence with others)

1. How does Jesus model the qualities that build passport? ([Rom. 5:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.%205.8); [John 15:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.11); [Matt. 11:28](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.%2011.28); [Mark 10:21](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark%2010.21))
2. Who has the strongest passport into your life? How did he or she earn it?
3. Which of the three areas listed above would the people in your life probably say is your greatest strength (trustworthy, caring, wisdom)? Which area would they wish you would grow in?
4. Describe a relationship or situation in which you did a good job building passport.
5. Describe a relationship or situation in which you did a poor job building passport.
6. What will you ask God to help you do differently in the days ahead to improve your ability to build and preserve passport with the people in your life.

[**The Wounds of a Friend**](https://rw360.org/2016/06/05/the-wounds-of-a-friend/)(Requesting candid feedback from others is a key to growth)

1. Do you think those closest to you—at home, at work and at church—feel comfortable expressing opinions that might differ from yours? How might you be discouraging that kind of honesty and openness?
2. Who do you feel most comfortable talking openly with, even to the point of disagreeing? What is it about that person that makes you feel safe to talk openly and candidly?
3. If you think you might be inhibiting people close to you, take some time to read and pray about the related blog posts listed above … and consider sharing them with those closest to you so they can help you to grow.
4. One of the best ways to discern God’s guidance is to hide his Word in your heart by daily memorization and meditation. Here is [a way to develop this discipline](http://peacemaker.net/project/hiding-gods-word-in-your-heart/).
5. Do you have a hard time receiving feedback and criticism from others? Here is an excellent article that shows how to grow in this grace: [The Cross and Criticism](https://rw360.org/the-cross-and-criticism/).

[**A Peacemaker’s Prayer**](https://rw360.org/2017/03/26/a-peacemakers-prayer/)(The kind of prayer that leads to effective peacemaking)

1. Which of these attitudes or qualities are sometimes lacking in you when you’re trying to resolve a conflict?
2. Which of these attitudes or qualities would you most like God to increase in your life?
3. When other people are trying to help you resolve a conflict, which of these attitudes or qualities do you appreciate the most?

8

Speak the Truth in Love

Truth spoken without love risks condemnation. But love spoken without truth risks empty flattery. When Paul tells us that we are to speak the truth in love, he calls us to speech that is both challenging and kind. This tension can be difficult to manage. When sinned against, our natural response is often to bring “the law” against the wrongdoer. With the law, we often justify ourselves and condemn others. For Christians, the law must always be seasoned with the gospel and with forgiveness. This is, after all, how Jesus confronts us. Being quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, is a good rule of thumb when working through conflicts of any kind. This helps us remain committed to what is best in the wrongdoer’s life and brings honor to God.

**8.1 – Bring Hope Through the Gospel**

1. If a non-Christian friend or coworker asked you to briefly explain the gospel, what would you say?
2. Beyond forgiving our sins and giving us eternal life with Christ, what are some implications or effects of the gospel in this life?
3. Why is it that many of us find it easier to “bring the law” to others rather than the gospel when dealing with conflict?
4. What impacted you most as you heard the story about Ken bringing the gospel to his daughter?
5. How does focusing first and foremost on the gospel rather than the law make it easier for others to hear correction and deal constructively with their own sin?

**8.2 – The Tongue of the Wise Brings Healing**

1. What does it mean in practical terms to “breathe grace” rather than condemnation?
2. Describe one or both these situations: (1) a time when another person assumed the worst about you instead of giving you an opportunity to explain something. How did that make you feel; (2) A time when someone made a charitable judgment about you, that is, assumed the best about you. How did that make you feel.
3. Describe a time when you wish you had made the effort to speak with someone face-to-face instead of communicating through a text, email, letter or phone call.
4. What are some practical ways that you can “talk from beside” someone rather than “talk from above” that person?

**8.3 – Recognize Your Limits**

1. Why is it important to recognize where your role in offering correction ends and God’s role in bringing repentance begins?
2. Why is saying something to another person three times a sign that you may be trying to play the role of the Holy Spirit?
3. Which of these key principles would you most like to become a consistent habit in your life? Why?

* Bring hope through the gospel
* Be quick to listen and slow to speak
* Breathe grace
* Make charitable judgments
* Talk in person whenever possible
* Talk from beside not from above
* Recognize your limits

**Peacemaking in Action**

**Background:** Allison is a stressed-out mother of three pre-school children who needed a night out with her friends. Everything went wrong, however, and her friends end up in jail. In this video, Allison is sitting in the waiting room at the police department waiting to bail her friends out. She is joined by Bones, a biker they met during their adventures.

[**Mom’s Night Out**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_aY2M5hxyw)

1. How does Bones “breathe grace” to Allision?
2. Although Bones doesn’t make a specific gospel presentation, what are two ways that he reminds Allision of God’s loving presence in her life?

1. How does Bones build an emotional and empathetic connection with Allison?
2. How does Bones manner of speaking make it easy for Allison to listen to him?
3. What advice does Bones give Allision and how does it seem to register with her?

**Search the Scriptures**

Having read the supporting Scriptures for this lesson, how would you expand or elaborate on one or two of the key principles in this lesson? Feel free to refer to additional passages that support a particular principle.

**Seek Transforming Grace**

Write a prayer asking God to give you grace to practice specific principles taught in this session, so they become lifelong habits that reflect the transforming power of Christ in your life (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 4:20-24).

**Digging Deeper**

Read Chapter 8 in *The Peacemaker*

The following blog posts illustrate different ways to apply relational peacemaking in daily life. We encourage you to read the posts that seem most relevant to your life at this time. If you are taking this course for credit or advanced training, you need to read at least one of these posts and answer the associated questions.

[**Penetrating Barriers with the Gospel**](http://rw360.org/2013/02/11/penetrating-barriers-with-the-gospel/)(The best way to touch and change someone’s heart)

1. When people have offended us, why are we so inclined to lecture them on what they’ve done wrong and what they need to do to make things right?
2. Do you see the gospel only as a ticket to heaven, or as good news we can share repeatedly to remind ourselves and others that God wants to free us more and more every day from the sins that damage our relationships ([2 Cor. 3:18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.%203.18))?
3. How does the transforming power of the gospel give you hope today? ([2 Pet. 1:5-8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet.%201.5-8); [Eph. 4:20-24](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.%204.20-24))
4. Who could you encourage today by sharing this good news with them? ([Rom. 1:16-17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.%201.16-17))

[**Breathe Grace**](https://rw360.org/2015/04/13/breathe-grace/)(How to make your words a channel of God’s grace)

1. Think of someone you consistently enjoy talking with; how does that person “breathe grace” to you?
2. How can these spiritual disciplines help you to “breathe in grace,” that is, make you more aware of God’s grace to you? Studying and meditating on his Word, praying; thanking him for his mercy and rejoicing in your salvation, delighting in his character and kindness, worshiping him, partaking of the Lord’s Supper, enjoying the fellowship of other believers. How can you practice them more productively?
3. Which three ways of breathing grace to others will you ask God to enable you to practice more consistently this week?

[**Clarity Plus Charity**](https://rw360.org/2013/04/07/clarity-plus-charity/)(Two skills that can prevent many conflicts in life)

1. What is the main reason you fail to communicate clearly?
2. How do these passages reinforce the concept of making charitable judgments: [Matthew 7:1-6](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%207.1-6); [Matthew 7:12](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%207.12); [1Corinthians 13:4-7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%2013.4-7)?
3. Read the [article on charitable judgments](https://rw360.org/2013/04/07/charitable-judgements-an-antidote-to-judging-others/) with a friend or in a small group and discuss the applications and limitations of this principle.

9

Take One or Two Others Along

When we disagree with others, Scripture teaches us to keep the matter as private as possible as long as possible. Scripture also calls us to speak *to* others rather than *about* others. Even when we apply these principles, private conversations are sometimes ineffective. Matthew 18:16-17 sets out further steps we may need to take: Involve 2 or 3 others (Mt 18:16); engage the church, especially leadership (Mt 18:17); and, if all else fails, treat the wrongdoer as a “pagan or a tax collector” (Mt 18:17). Even removing someone from worship has as the goal of promoting repentance and restoration. Our response is not to shun people who have been disciplined, but to evangelize them and to win back their hearts for God.

**9.1 – Take One or Two Others Along as Reconcilers**

1. Without providing identifying details, describe a situation when involving one or two other people helped to resolve a conflict.
2. Without providing identifying details, describe one or more situations in which someone provided some of the following types of assistance to resolve a conflict.

* Demonstrated care and concern
* Encouraged self-control and courtesy
* Asked questions to clarify facts
* Counseled or admonished by using God’s Word
* Expanded Resources
* Observed conduct and reported to a church
* Mediated or arbitrated

**9.2 – Tell It to the Church**

1. What impacted you most about Ken’s story about how a church restored a man who was trapped in dishonest business practices?
2. Without providing identifying details, describe a situation where church leaders should have gotten involved in conflict but declined to do so. What was the result?
3. Without providing identifying details, describe a situation where church leaders got involved in conflict and it turned out well. Why was that?

**9.3 – Treat the Other Person as a Nonbeliever**

1. Reread Matthew 18:15-20. Jesus’ instructions are clear and quite specific. Why do you think so many churches are reluctant to follow these instructions when a member is persisting in sin?
2. What impacted you most about Ken’s story about how he warned a man about the consequences of church discipline?
3. Without providing identifying details, describe a situation where church leaders carried out Jesus’ command in Matthew 18: 17 and removed someone from church membership. What was the result?

**9.4 – Forgive and Restore the Repentant**

1. Do you agree or disagree with Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s statement, “Nothing is so cruel as the tenderness that consigns another to his sin. Nothing is more compassionate than the severe rebuke that calls a brother back from the path of sin.” Why?
2. Without providing identifying details, describe a situation where a church’s failure to exercise discipline enabled someone to continue in sin.
3. Without providing identifying details, describe a situation where a church’s compassionate discipline delivered someone from the path of sin.

**Peacemaking in Action**

**Background:** Frank (played by Tom Selleck) lives with his father, Henry. Both men are widowers. In the first video Frank broaches a delicate topic in a way that offends his father. In the second video, Frank’s daughter, approaches the issue more wisely and graciously.

[**Blue Bloods – You Shouldn’t Be Driving**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upuL9xuOcSU)

[**Blue Bloods – Please Give Up Your Keys**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbIbd6YYILY)

1. Why was Frank’s initial approach to his father unsuccessful?
2. What did Erin do that made her approach more winsome and effective?
3. How did Frank learn from his daughter and imitate her approach?
4. What made Henry (Frank’s father) feel safe to honestly admit that it was time for him to give up his keys?

**Search the Scriptures**

Having read the supporting Scriptures for this lesson, how would you expand or elaborate on one or two of the key principles in this lesson? Feel free to refer to additional passages that support a particular principle.

**Seek Transforming Grace**

Write a prayer asking God to give you grace to practice specific principles taught in this session, so they become lifelong habits that reflect the transforming power of Christ in your life (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 4:20-24).

**Digging Deeper**

Read Chapter 9 in *The Peacemaker*

The following blog posts illustrate different ways to apply relational peacemaking in daily life. We encourage you to read the posts that seem most relevant to your life at this time. If you are taking this course for credit or advanced training, you need to read at least one of these posts and answer the associated questions.

[**Three P’s of Satisfaction**](https://rw360.org/2016/05/10/the-3-ps-of-satisfaction/)(Three essential elements of successful mediation, whether in your home or a multi-million dollar lawsuit)

1. The main complaint people have about going through civil litigation is how attorneys use constant objections to keep them from fully telling their side of the story. Why do you think this is so frustrating?
2. When was the last time you were involved in a disagreement and someone else made a decision you disagreed with? Did you walk away satisfied or dissatisfied? Was it just that you didn’t get the result (product satisfaction) you wanted, or was it also that you weren’t satisfied with the process or the way you were treated personally?
3. When was the last time you had to resolve a matter by making a decision someone else didn’t like? Did they walk away generally satisfied or dissatisfied? What more might you have done to provide them with process and personal satisfaction?
4. The next time you have the opportunity to make a decision that will settle a disagreement or determine a course of action, what could you do to increase the likelihood that others will walk away with all three types of satisfaction (process, personal, and product)?

[**Reconciling Two Stubborn Scientists**](https://rw360.org/2022/02/06/two-stubborn-scientists-2/) (Using “Sunday school peacemaking principles” to solve an employer’s million dollar problem)

1. What do you think gave Diane the courage and confidence to offer her help even though other people with supposedly better training failed to resolve this problem?
2. Why do you think these two stubborn scientists were willing to meet with Diane and listen to her advice?
3. What were the key things Diane did that made her approach successful?
4. Can you identify a situation where God may be calling you to serve him as a peacemaker?

[**Four Amazing Church Discipline Cases**](https://rw360.org/2020/06/23/four-amazing-church-discipline-cases/)(Turning church discipline into a redemptive rescue mission)

1. Has your experience with or perception of church discipline been positive or negative? Why?
2. How can the gospel change our attitude toward and our approach to church discipline?
3. What difference does having “passport” make when exercising discipline?
4. What are some ways that church leaders can provide process and personal satisfaction when carrying out discipline?
5. How do the principles of effective church discipline apply to disciplining a child?
6. How do these principles apply to resolving behavioral problems with an employee?

**A picture containing text, clothing, person, human face

Description automatically generatedFurther Training**

If you would like to learn more about how you can apply the principles of relational wisdom and peacemaking to mediate conflicts in your home, church or workplace, please download our free 70-page ebooklet, [**Guiding People Through Conflict**](http://www.rw360.org/gptc).

For information about online training courses in coaching and mediation, please see RW360’s [**Training and Certification Program**](https://rw360.org/rw-training/).

**Preliminary Case Study**

**Read case study #3, The Threatening Trustee** ([download booklet here](http://www.rw360.org/downloads)). At the end of the course, you will have the opportunity to write detailed advice on how to approach this situation. For now, however, simply write some preliminary thoughts on (1) what you would advise your friend not to do and (2) how some of the peacemaking principles you have learned so far might eventually be relevant to this situation.

**Go and Be Reconciled**

Peacemaking involves restoring damaged relationships and negotiating just agreements. When we forgive others as Jesus has forgiven us and seek solutions that satisfy the interests of others as well as our own, the door is opened to reconciliation and peace.

10

Forgive as God Forgave You

Forgiveness is the heart of the gospel. Through our faith in Jesus, we are a forgiven people. Scripture commands us to forgive others in the same way we have been forgiven. Some of us confuse forgiveness with forgetting or with feeling good about the wrongdoer. Real forgiveness is a choice, a decision made in gratitude for the forgiveness we have received. When we forgive someone, we release them from liability for the sins they committed against us. The Four Promises of Forgiveness are tools that help us live out the forgiveness we have received from God.

* 1. **– Astonishing Forgiveness**

1. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: “Christians are the most forgiven people in the world; therefore, we should be the most forgiving people in the world”? How would your relationships and your witness for Christ change if you lived up to this calling on a daily basis?
2. What impacts you most about the story of the couple who offered forgiveness to the two nurses who were responsible for the death of their baby? Why?
3. Why do so many situations like this result in multimillion dollar lawsuits?

**10.2 – The Four Promises of Forgiveness**

1. Why is it helpful to replace the saying “forgive and forget” with the saying “forgive to forget?”
2. How does it help to realize that “sin creates a debt that must be paid?”
3. Which of the Four Promises of forgiveness do you find easiest to make? Which of them do you find difficult to make?
4. Describe a situation when you have experienced the gift of forgiveness.

**10.3 – Applying the Four Promises**

1. Have you ever experienced the kind of forgiveness described by the Four Promises?
2. What kinds of sins do you find hardest to forgive?
3. How can focusing on the forgiveness of God in Christ help you to forgive even those kinds of sins?
4. How could you use forgiveness of a non-Christian friend or coworker as a way to share the gospel?

**10.4 – Reconciliation Takes Work**

1. Ephesians 4:32 says, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” How can meditating on the forgiveness you have received in Christ help you to forgive others?
2. In Matthew 18:21-32, Jesus tells a parable about a man who is forgiven a huge debt and yet refuses to forgive someone else for a much smaller debt. Describe a time when you were like that unmerciful servant. What were you forgetting?
3. Which of the following sinful attitudes and unrealistic expectations mentioned in this lesson have you struggled with: Expecting the offender to earn or deserve forgiveness, desiring to punish the offender, or demanding a guarantee that the offender would never do the same thing again? How have you sought to overcome these tendencies?
4. Describe a time when God enabled you to use the “replacement principle” to overcome unforgiveness.
5. Elaborate on this statement: “Our forgiveness shows what we think of God’s forgiveness.” How do hope and pray God will help you to live out this principle in the future?

**Peacemaking in Action**

[**A Second Chance at Life**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7WMx7Vi8VM&t=63s)

1. How did this video inspire or challenge you?
2. Assuming that Renee is a Christian, how did she demonstrate a deep trust in God?
3. How did Renee’s forgiveness imitate the forgiveness we receive from God through the gospel of Christ?
4. How did this story illustrate the “Golden Result?”
5. Is there someone God is calling you to forgive the same way Renee forgave Eric?

**Search the Scriptures**

Having read the supporting Scriptures for this lesson, how would you expand or elaborate on one or two of the key principles in this lesson? Feel free to refer to additional passages that support a particular principle.

**Seek Transforming Grace**

Write a prayer asking God to give you grace to practice specific principles taught in this session, so they become lifelong habits that reflect the transforming power of Christ in your life (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 4:20-24).

**Digging Deeper**

Read Chapter 10 in *The Peacemaker*

The following blog posts illustrate different ways to apply relational peacemaking in daily life. We encourage you to read the posts that seem most relevant to your life at this time. If you are taking this course for credit or advanced training, you need to read at least one of these posts and answer the associated questions.

[**Stupidity of Bitterness**](https://rw360.org/2017/11/06/stupidity-of-bitterness/)(Bitterness is like stabbing yourself repeatedly with a knife)

Think of a time when you felt prolonged bitterness toward someone.

1. How did it affect you? ([Psalm 73:21-22](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2073.21-22); [Psalm 106:32-33](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20106.32-33); [Acts 8:23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%208.23); [James 3:14](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%203.14))
2. How did it affect your relationship with God? ([Isaiah 59:1-2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2059.1-2))
3. How did it affect your relationship with others? ([Proverbs 10:12](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%2010.12))
4. How can focusing on the Lord help you to get rid of bitterness? ([Eph. 4:30-32](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.%204.30-32))

[**Do a 180**](https://rw360.org/2013/11/03/180/)(When to do the opposite of what you feel like to doing)

1. How do these passages support the concept of doing the opposite of what our feelings are leading us to do: [Luke 23:34](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%2023.34); 1 Samuel 24; [Romans 12:19-21](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2012.19-21); [Acts 7:54-60](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%207.54-60)?
2. How does doing the opposite of what we feel like doing give us an opportunity to imitate God ([Rom. 5:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.%205.8))?
3. Think of a time when you let negative and distressing emotions guide your words and actions toward another person. How did it feel initially? How did the situation turn out in the long run? Were you glad or sad that you followed your emotions?
4. Are you in a challenging relationship that is triggering emotions that seem to be moving you to distance yourself from another person or to say or do hurtful things toward him? What would be the opposite course of action? Do you think that is where God wants you to go?
5. Why is it essential that you do these things without expecting the other person to do anything for you in return?

[**Forgive Like Edison, or Better Yet, Like Jesus**](https://rw360.org/2015/07/05/forgive-like-edison-or-better-yet-jesus/)(How to show people they’re really forgiven)

1. Have you ever been estranged from a person or group that refused to be genuinely reconciled with you? How did it feel? How did you respond?
2. Why is it that Christians often fail to carry out this crucial restoring process?
3. Why are many non-Christians more forgiving than those who claim to trust in Jesus? (see [Common Grace: Exploring Relationships with Non-Christians](https://rw360.org/2013/10/16/common-grace-rw/))
4. How does a right understanding of the gospel provide the motivation, pattern, and power to genuinely restore broken relationships?
5. How can making and keeping the “[Four Promises of Forgiveness](https://rw360.org/four-promises-of-forgiveness/)” help to restore a relationship?
6. Is there a repentant person you’ve been holding at a distance, either deliberately or simply because you were insensitive to their desire for reconciliation? Go to that person today and imitate the restoring love of Christ with concrete and visible actions.
7. See this [excerpt from *The Peacemaker*](https://rw360.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/When-Should-You-Forgive.pdf) for guidance on the related concepts of confession, repentance, discipline, accountability, restitution and protecting others from unrepentant people.

[**Embarrassing Sin, Comforting Forgiveness**](https://rw360.org/2015/01/30/embarrassing-sin/)(How to comfort someone who has made a big mistake)

1. Think of a time when you blew it and someone forgave you in a way that made you feel truly forgiven. What was it about their words or actions that conveyed genuine and complete forgiveness?
2. How can the forgiveness that we’ve received from God through Jesus inspire us to forgive others the deepest kinds of wrongs? ([Luke 23:34](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%2023.34); [Eph. 4:32](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.%204.32); [Col. 3:12-13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.%203.12-13))
3. Sometimes people will wrong you in a way that makes it difficult to sincerely say that you still respect and believe in them. Even then, you can convey meaningful forgiveness by sharing the [Four Promises of Forgiveness](https://rw360.org/four-promises-of-forgiveness/): (1) I will not dwell on this incident; (2) I will not bring up this incident again and use it against you; (3) I will not talk to others about this incident; (4) I will not let this incident stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.
4. Think of a person you could bless with Christ-like forgiveness. Go to them as soon as possible and imitate Jesus.

11

Look Also to the Interests of Others

Conflict narrows our focus, leading us to view matters in absolute terms – I’m right and she’s wrong; I want what is good, so she must want what is bad. Life is seldom this black and white, and such thinking can reveal a self-focus that has tipped into idolatry. Paul’s counsel in Philippians 2 – to be concerned not only for our own interests, but also for the interests of others – is an antidote for hearts that have become hardened. The PAUSE Principle enables us to negotiate substantive disagreements in a way that takes the concerns of all into account. The key is understanding “interests” and negotiating in a cooperative manner.

**11.1 – Are You Competitive or Cooperative?**

1. The key passage for this session is Philippians 2:3-4: “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Why is this such a powerful approach to most negotiations?
2. When you need to negotiate something, are you inclined to be competitive (see it as a tug-of-war, focusing on getting what you want) or cooperative (looking out for the other person’s interests as well as your own)? How successful is your approach?
3. Describe an issue you negotiated competitively. How did it go?
4. Describe an issue you negotiated cooperatively. How did it go?

**11.2 – Prepare and Affirm**

1. Think of two or three situations where you had to negotiate with someone. What were some ways that you effectively prepared for a negotiation? In retrospect, what are some ways you wish you had better prepared for a negotiation?
2. Think of two or three situations where you had to negotiate with someone. What were some ways that you effectively affirmed your relationship as you negotiated? In retrospect, what are some ways you wish you had made a greater effort to affirm a relationship?
3. How does Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 7:12 give practical guidance on how to affirm others when negotiating: “So, whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets”?
   1. **– Understand Interests**
4. Think of two or three situations where you had to negotiate with someone. What were the issues you were negotiating? What positions were taken? What were the key underlying interests in these situations?
5. What would have probably happened in David’s life if Abigail had not negotiated a God-honoring resolution to David’s dispute with her husband?
6. What can you learn from Abigail’s approach to negotiation?

**11.4 – Keep Digging for Real Interests**

1. Recall a conflict in which emotions such as anger, bitterness or fear of losing others’ respect impacted the way you negotiated. What was the result? What would have happened if you had been more relationally wise by being God-aware, self-aware and others-aware in that situation?
2. Describe a time when you thought you understood another person’s interests, but you eventually discovered that they were concerned about something entirely different from what you assumed.

**11.5 – Search for Creative Solutions**

1. Why is prayer one of our most powerful tools when searching for creative negotiated solutions?
2. What are the key insights you gained from the story about Daniel negotiation for an mutually acceptable diet?
3. Why is it helpful to evaluate options objectively and reasonably rather than simply advocating for solutions you prefer?
4. How would negotiation skills described in Scripture help to improve job performance and career advancement of Christians in the workplace?

**Peacemaking in Action**

[**The Gainesville Tornados**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jy8ssyQ1kkQ)

1. How did Hudson and Ben (the players from Vanguard) live out the memory verse for this session: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Phil. 2:3-4).
2. Why did Hudson say, “It doesn’t seem right for them not to have someone cheering for them.”
3. Why do you think this act of love became so contagious and moved other students from Vanguard to cheer for the Tornadoes?
4. How might God have used this act of love to change the Tornado players in the future?
5. If Hudson and Ben continue to grow in this kind of sensitivity to the interests of others, what other parts of their lives would probably be affected in the future?

**Search the Scriptures**

Having read the supporting Scriptures for this lesson, how would you expand or elaborate on one or two of the key principles in this lesson? Feel free to refer to additional passages that support a particular principle.

**Seek Transforming Grace**

Write a prayer asking God to give you grace to practice specific principles taught in this session, so they become lifelong habits that reflect the transforming power of Christ in your life (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 4:20-24).

**Digging Deeper**

Read Chapter 11 in *The Peacemaker*

The following blog posts illustrate different ways to apply relational peacemaking in daily life. We encourage you to read the posts that seem most relevant to your life at this time. If you are taking this course for credit or advanced training, you need to read at least one of these posts and answer the associated questions.

[**Here’s Looking at You, Kid**](https://rw360.org/2019/08/18/heres-looking-kid-2/)(Learning peacemaking from Humphrey Bogart)

1. How did Rick live out the key elements of Philippians 2:3-4?
2. How was Rick looking out not only for Ilsa’s interests but also for his own interests and the interests of a much wider circle of people?
3. How can practicing the READ principles help you to negotiate more effectively?

[**Reagan, Lincoln, RW and You**](https://rw360.org/2018/02/27/reagan-lincoln-rw-2/) (Learning negotiation skills from Ronald Reagan)

1. Take a few minutes to read Reagan’s [memo on Gorbachev](https://rw360.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Reagan-on-Gorbachev.pdf) and his [address at Moscow State University](https://rw360.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Reagan-to-MSU-Students.pdf). What impresses you most? How could you follow his example in navigating some of the challenging relationships in your life?
2. Who is another public figure who inspires you with his or her people skills? Think of a specific relationship or situation in which you could imitate that person’s skills.
3. If Ronald Reagan took time to write a journal where he collected his insights into other people as well as himself, do you think you could find time to do the same? It’s one of the best ways to make steady growth in your relational skills. Here are some ideas on [how you can get started](https://rw360.org/journaling).

[**7 Ways to Redeem an Offense**](https://rw360.org/2018/12/17/7-ways-to-redeem-an-offense/)(Turning an offense into ministry and growth)

1. If you’d like to read *The Nail* blog post and watch the video, [click here](https://rw360.org/2013/07/15/the-nail/). How did this video and post affect you? Can you see how Ruth and others with her background could be troubled by this video?
2. How did Ken's approach to Ruth demonstrate the key elements of the PAUSE principle?
3. What were Ruth's underlying interests?
4. Think of a few times when others have deeply offended you. Do you withdraw in anger and hurt, or do you reach out to seek understanding and reconciliation? Do you resist seeing your own weaknesses, or do you display the humility, teachability and flexibility that Ruth modeled?
5. Which of Ruth’s seven responses described above impressed you the most? Why?

12

Overcome Evil with Good

Sometimes nothing seems to work. We pray faithfully, take personal responsibility, speak restoratively, consider the interests of others and still there is no peace. As Christians, we know this never means that God is not working, or that he doesn’t hear our prayers. He is always with us and working for our good (Rom. 8:28). Therefore, we must continue to trust in his timing and not become discouraged. Waiting on God should never be passive, however. We continue to pray. We are to watch what we say. We can seek the wisdom of godly advisors. We must continue to do what is right. We need to remember that it is God’s job to change hearts, not ours. And we can deploy the “ultimate” weapon – a deliberate, focused love that meets the needs of enemies. In doing so, we imitate Jesus himself, who rescued us “while we were yet sinners.”

**12.1 – We Have Divine Weapons**

1. What does it mean to “never close the Book.” Why is this true?
2. Describe a situation where one of these divine weapons helped you resolve a difficult conflict: the Holy Spirit, the Bible, others in the Body of Christ.
3. Why is it so hard to control your tongue when you’re dealing with someone who persists in being unreasonable?
4. How can speaking words of blessing to or about an unreasonable person help to improve a difficult situation? (Hint: remember the Golden Result.)

**12.2 – Seek Godly Advisors / Keep Doing What Is Right**

1. The Bible is filled with examples of people giving and receiving advice during challenging times. Describe a few situations that you can recall from reading the Bible or listening to sermons.
2. What is some of the best advice you’ve ever received when dealing with conflict? Did you follow it or ignore it? What was the result?
3. When have you been tempted to get even with someone who has wronged you (i.e., to “repay evil for evil”)? What happened?
4. Describe a time when you went against your feelings and managed to do what you knew would be “honorable” in the sight of God and other people.

**12.3 – Recognize Your Limits and Use the Ultimate Weapon**

1. Describe a few situations from the Bible or from life where people did not see the outcomes they desired, but God ended up using it for good.
2. Describe a situation in which you or another person found a way to meet a significant need of an opponent. How did that situation turn out in the long run.
3. In the story about the neighbors fighting over a property line, one of the neighbors said that when he handed the end of an extension cord to his neighbor, it suddenly felt like “electricity” (a current of love) was passing through his body. This is the third time in this seminar that this type of expression has been used. Where do you think this “current of love” is coming from?
4. How is the gospel the greatest example of the principle: “Overcome evil with good”? How can the gospel inspire us to offer even our enemies deliberate, focused love?

**12.4 If Your Enemy is Freezing**

1. Many Christians have a tendency to think they need to show that they always “have their act together” in order to give a credible testimony of the gospel. Why is it that we are often more credible when we are transparent about our weaknesses and failures?
2. Why does doing something kind for an enemy often change our own heart and attitude toward that person?
3. How can this passage encourage you when you’re dealing with a prolonged conflict? “Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Cor. 15:58).
4. What are some ways that you hope and pray God will help you to practice the principles in this seminar in a way that draws attention to the reconciling power of Jesus Christ and his gospel?

**Peacemaking in Action**

[**Cab Driver Donates Kidney**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lM4ebWPgus&t=2s)

1. How does this story reflect the glory of the gospel?
2. How wide did the ripples from Tom’s kind deed spread? Who all was impacted by his loving action?
3. Describe a situation where you or someone you know responded to acts of unkindness with undeserved love. How did God use that loving deed?
4. What good can come from an undeserved act of love even if the unkind person does not respond positively?

**Search the Scriptures**

Having read the supporting Scriptures for this lesson, how would you expand or elaborate on one or two of the key principles in this lesson? Feel free to refer to additional passages that support a particular principle.

**Seek Transforming Grace**

Write a prayer asking God to give you grace to practice specific principles taught in this session, so they become lifelong habits that reflect the transforming power of Christ in your life (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 4:20-24).

**Digging Deeper**

Read Chapter 12 in *The Peacemaker*

The following blog posts illustrate different ways to apply relational peacemaking in daily life. We encourage you to read the posts that seem most relevant to your life at this time. If you are taking this course for credit or advanced training, you need to read at least one of these posts and answer the associated questions.

[**If Your Enemy Needs Electricity**](https://rw360.org/2015/05/14/if-your-enemy-needs-electricity/)

1. How does returning goodness for evil reflect the glory of the gospel and the character of God?
2. Has anyone ever treated you with undeserved kindness? How did it make you feel? How did it affect your relationship?
3. Have you seen examples of other people meeting the needs of someone who did not deserve their kindness? What impact did that have?

[**If Your Enemy Is Hungry**](https://rw360.org/2015/11/15/if-your-enemy-is-hungry/)

1. What is the difference between flattery and authentic praise and appreciation? (see [1 Thess. 2:3-5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.%202.3-5))
2. How did the Apostle Paul use sincere praise and appreciation to strengthen relationships and motivate people to do what was right? (see [Philemon 1-21](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Philem%201-21); [Rom. 16:1-16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.%2016.1-16); [1Cor. 1:4-10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.%201.4-10))
3. When Paul learned that there was tension between two women in the church in Philippi, why did he instruct them, among other things, to focus on what was “true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, and excellent”? (see [Phil. 4:2-9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.%204.2-9))
4. Think of someone in your life who seems to be critical of you or others. What legitimate but unmet desire might be contributing to that attitude? How might that desire have grown into a demand that is fueling conflict? (see [James 4:1-3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%204.1-3); see [Getting to the Heart of Conflict](https://rw360.org/getting-to-the-heart-of-conflict/)) Is there a way you could meet that desire in a constructive and redeeming way? (see [Rom. 12:20-21](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.%2012.20-21); [John 21:15-17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2021.15-17))

[**How Well Do You Love Your Enemies?**](https://rw360.org/2019/06/03/how-well-do-you-love-your-enemies/)

1. What emotions do you see in the following characters: Ernest Gordon? His commanding officer? The Allied prisoners? The wounded Japanese soldiers? The Japanese commander? The young Japanese enlisted man? What lies at the root of these emotions? How do each of them respond to their emotions?
2. How does Gordon’s ability to see the wounded Japanese soldiers as human beings made in the image of God transform how he engages them?
3. How did Jesus view and respond to the people who treated him so brutally? ([Luke 23:34](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%2023.34)). How did this reflect the character of his Father? ([Psalm 103:8-14](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20103.8-14)).
4. When people have mistreated you, what emotions did you feel? What did you do? How well did your behavior fulfill the teaching of [Luke 6:27-28](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%206.27-28) and [Romans 12:19-21](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2012.19-21)?
5. If you have failed to love others as Jesus would, take hold of the promise of [1 John 1:8-9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%201.8-9) by confessing your sin to God, believing that he has forgiven you, and praying for grace to cooperate with him as he fulfills his promise to purify you and give you the ability to love others–even those who hate, mistreat and curse you–as Jesus did ([Romans 8:29](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.29); [2 Corinthians 3:18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor%203.18); [Acts 7:59-60](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%207.59-60)).
6. Identify one person who you find difficult to love and ask God to give you wisdom and grace to see that person as a “wounded, dying human being” (which we all are), and to love and serve him or her in concrete ways today.

**Final Case Studies**

Open the **Relational Peacemaking Case Studies** booklet ([download here](http://www.rw360.org/downloads)). After reviewing your preliminary thoughts on the first three case studies, which you may have recorded at the end of sessions 3, 6 and 9 in this booklet, write a personal email (in the Case Studies booklet) explaining how a friend could apply the basic principles of peacemaking in each of the four case studies.